

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, later this morning in Maryland, the President will try again to sell his namesake health care plan to an increasingly skeptical public. He will claim that Americans will have lots and lots of options under ObamaCare. Unfortunately, keeping the plan you have and like will not be an option for a great many Americans.

It must be frustrating for the President that folks keep tuning out all of this happy talk. It is not hard to see, frankly, why Americans are not buying the spin. Over the past couple of years, I have participated in more than 50 health care town halls in my home State. I have met with health care professionals, doctors, and nurses. I have met with patients, and I have met with everyday Kentuckians, folks who are just concerned about providing health care for their families.

Many of the Kentuckians I have met with are a lot more knowledgeable about ObamaCare than the Washington intelligentsia might like to assume. In fact, more than a few of them seem to know more about the law than some of my colleagues who rammed it through Congress. Let's be clear. A person does not need a Ph.D. to understand that a law that drives costs up rather than down is a bad deal.

Kentuckians understand that the new government bureaucracies are less likely to lower costs and improve care than they are to just simply get in the way. So it is for these and so many other reasons that Kentuckians and people across this country are rightly concerned about ObamaCare.

Two nights ago, I had another great opportunity to connect on this issue with Kentuckians via a tele-town hall. I will tell you, the good people of my State are as concerned about this law as ever. One woman who participated said she thought she had been making it, but reports that she will now be forced to get a second job due in no small part to ObamaCare.

I have received more than 50,000 letters from constituents frustrated by ObamaCare as well. Single parents want to know what they are supposed to do when their hours are cut. Families want to know why Washington is OK with their insurance premiums going up by double digits. Small business owners want to know how they are ever going to comply with more than 20,000 pages of regulations. They want to know how they are going to be able to keep their employees insured, workforces growing, businesses expanding, and far too often, their doors open once this law comes on line.

One Kentuckian from Henderson wrote to me about the small trucking

business she and her husband own. They have got 13 employees, and they have always provided insurance for all of them. But their agent recently told them their premiums would go up, a 100-percent increase in premiums. Here is what she wrote to me:

We can't afford this, even if we raise the portion the employees pay. Then they wouldn't be able to afford it.

That was the experience reported to me by a woman and her husband running a small business in Henderson. These are the utterly predictable consequences of a law rammed through by a Democratic majority over the objections of the American people early on a cold, dark, Christmas Eve morning.

Until a few brave Democrats join our united Republican conference in voting to get rid of ObamaCare and starting over with a real bipartisan reform, we are going to continue hearing this same heart-wrenching stories over and over again.

We are going to keep seeing articles like the one that appeared earlier this week in Politico. It is titled, "Obamacare: One Blow After Another." I want to read the opening paragraph:

The ObamaCare that consumers will finally be able to sign up for next week is a long way from the health plan President Barack Obama first pitched to the nation.

Among other things the story notes that "millions of low-income Americans will not receive coverage" and "a growing number of workers won't get to keep their employer-provided coverage." Just yesterday, we heard the District of Columbia's exchange hit a huge bump in the road just days before launch. I would not be surprised if we see more stories of these types of problems popping up all across our country.

Let's talk about premiums too. A few weeks ago one veteran at a town hall wanted to know how this law could possibly be free. This veteran said: How can it possibly be free? Well, of course it is not free. He was right. Premiums are part of that story. Based on the administration's own data, along with some intrepid reporting, here is how much more a single 27-year-old can expect to pay under ObamaCare in Columbus, OH: 436 percent increase, for a 27-year-old under ObamaCare in Columbus, OH.

In Charlotte, NC, it is 523 percent; Little Rock, 613 percent more, 613 percent. Imagine for a moment. You are 27. You have done everything right. You have studied hard, graduated from college. You have student loan debt, car payments, car insurance payments, utility bills, rent, renter's insurance, 401(k) contributions, and health insurance, of course. Then there is gas, food, and maybe just maybe, occasionally having a little bit of fun.

Then you lose your employer-sponsored health plan thanks to ObamaCare. You get dumped into the exchanges. So jack up those monthly health insurance payments by 300, 500, even 600 percent. What are you supposed to do now, go uninsured and pay

penalty taxes? Stop contributing to your retirement account? You cannot very well give up the car you need to get to work, or food, or paying back your student loans.

None of this is a good option. They are not good for our society either. We should not be setting up disincentives for 27-year-olds to insure themselves or contribute to their own retirement. But this is the incentive structure that ObamaCare creates. When you consider how hard the Obama economy has hammered millennials already, it is hardly fair to whack them again, especially when so many are just barely hanging on as it is.

So this law is a mess. It needs to go. It is way past time to start over. As I have been saying all week, we need just five brave Democrats to join us to make that happen. So I hope some of our Democratic friends who voted for this law will look at themselves in the mirror and think, truly think, about whether protecting the President's pride is really more important than helping the American people, because we owe our constituents better than ObamaCare.

We can do better. With your help we can do that. With your help we can start over with the kind of real bipartisan reform that Kentuckians and Americans are actually hoping for.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H. J. Res. 59, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H. J. Res 59) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 1974, to perfect the joint resolution.

Reid amendment No. 1975 (to amendment No. 1974), to change the enactment date.

Reid motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions, Reid amendment No. 1976, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 1977 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 1976), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 1978 (to amendment No. 1977), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time will be controlled in hour increments, with the majority controlling the first hour and alternating thereafter.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the families that I talk to in my home